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ABSTRACT

The Indicators of Quality Schools instrument is designed to be used in school self-studies to identify priority areas for improvement or closer study. Uses for the instrument are outlined in this user's guide. Emphasis is placed on ensuring that the staff is oriented to evaluating school practices. The instrument may be completed by small groups collectively or individually. A detailed nine-step discussion is provided on how to summarize results after using the instrument. Included in table 1 is a blank summary form for plotting scores. Four questions are provided to help in the interpretation of category or item analysis results. Table 2 includes a copy of the Items Data used in the instrument. (MD)

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INDICATORS OF QUALITY SCHOOLS

II. USERS' GUIDE

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
School Improvement and Leadership Services Unit

May, 1982

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INDICATORS OF QUALITY SCHOOLS

I. Overview

II. Users' Guide

III. Review of the Literature on Effective Schools

Instrument to Assess the Educational Quality of Your School

II. USERS' GUIDE

USING THE QUALITY INDICATORS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

A. Introduction

The Indicators of Quality Schools instrument is designed to be used in a school self-study, such as those leading to school accreditation. The primary object is to identify priority areas for improvement or for closer study.

The assessment items come from the research on effective schools conducted over recent years plus some items that have been added to reflect agreed-upon good school practice. The research on effective schools has the limitation of looking only at selective outcomes (mostly basic skills achievement) and certain school models. Clearly not all school practices are included, but all the areas included are important to successful schools.

Some repetition of items may be noted. This repetition occurs because some activities will, if working well, have an impact on more than one quality indicator.

The purpose of the assessment of educational quality is to provide the faculty and others with a profile of the school. From this profile the staff can identify some practices or conditions that are strong, that are comparatively weak, and where there is agreement that improvement efforts would have the most pay-off for school effectiveness. Activities, programs, and projects can then be designed to strengthen those practices seen by the faculty as being potentially the most influential in improving the school's effectiveness.

Respondents to the mini-audits may be staff members, informed pupils, or parents who are well-acquainted with the school's programs and activities. It would not, however, be appropriate to ask people who have little acquaintance with the school to complete the forms. For this reason we do not recommend giving the form to all students or all parents.

The Indicators of Quality Schools consist of 42 items and 203 sub-items each of which are responded to on two "What is?" - "What Impact Potential?" scales. This takes at least an hour. In some cases you may want to select certain areas for assessment, or you may want to omit sub-item responses on the impact potential scale.

B. One Recommended Use for the Instrument

1. Form a steering committee or school improvement committee or designate part of your existing school management team as such.

2. The instrument may be used in a number of ways. The steering committee should decide on a recommended strategy.

   a) Normally each staff member will fill out the forms.

b) In administering this instrument you may wish to organize your faculty into small groups of three persons per group. Each member of each triad would then be asked to complete an individual mini-audit form. The triad leader would, however, encourage discussion and information-sharing regarding the items as the group proceeds through the instrument together.

c) Small groups of three or four may fill out the forms collectively instead of individually.

d) You may want to have students and parents also fill out the form.

e) The steering committee may elect to use only certain sections for the survey or to split the questionnaire in half and have each person do only half.

3. Orient the staff. Be sure the staff is interested in looking at their school practices.

4. The steering committee tabulates the results by item and by category (area) showing both frequency and mean (average) response. Have any comments typed out for review.

5. Items or categories showing little consensus and great diversity in response are discussed at a staff meeting. A consensus rating is reached. The sub-item ratings can help pinpoint differences in understanding.

6. Display the results for each category or area (Table 1). Through a group discussion of staff, and perhaps students and parents, agree on which one to three areas to focus on for improvement.

7. Set up mechanisms to develop plans for improvement. Individuals may be assigned priorities in some cases. More often, one or more task forces should be developed to work out ideas and action plans for improving the school in each priority area. You may want to do a further in-depth study of priority areas, or you may want to collect some base-line data for future use. These task forces should have volunteers from staff and, where appropriate, students, parents, and citizens.

8. Implement the improvement activities and report on plans and progress to all staff and advisory groups.

C. How to Summarize the Results

Follow these steps and you will be able to summarize the results of the quality assessment with a minimum of difficulty.

1. Separate the questionnaires by role group.

2. Compute the average (mean) rating given by each respondent for each of the 12 categories. You may ask the respondent to do this at the time he or she fills out the forms.

3. Enter these figures in the boxes provided on the indicators instrument. Two figures are entered: the mean for WHAT IS and the mean for IMPACT POTENTIAL.

4. Since there is more than one respondent for each role group, compute the mean score for each category by adding all the mean for each category and dividing by the number of respondents. For example, suppose there are nine teacher questionnaires. Their scores on the Time on Task category (from the boxes) are as follows:

Respondent	What Is Score	Impact Potential Score
Teacher 1	1.1	2.5
Teacher 2	1.5	2.8
Teacher 3	1.2	3.0
Teacher 4	2.4	2.6
Teacher 5	1.2	3.0
Teacher 6	2.0	2.8
Teacher 7	1.3	3.0
Teacher 8	1.2	2.6
Teacher 9	1.6	2.9
	9/13.5	9/25.2
	1.5	2.8

5. Plot these mean scores (1.5 and 2.8) on the blank Table 1 summary form provided on the next page.

Table 1

School _____

Date _____

Respondents _____

INDICATORS OF QUALITY SCHOOLS

SUMMARY PLOT OF WHAT IS AND IMPACT POTENTIAL SCORES

INDICATOR CATEGORY	0	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4
1. Curricular Congruence									
2. Assessment									
3. Leadership of Principal									
4. High Expectations									
5. School-wide Norms									
6. School Climate									
7. Monitoring Student Progress									
8. Time on Task									
9. Classroom Management									
10. Instructional Effectiveness									
11. Parent Involvement									
12. Planning Process									

_____ WHAT IS

- - - - - IMPACT POTENTIAL

6. After computing in a similar manner the mean scores for the other quality school categories, connect the "What Is" scores with a black line. Then connect the "Impact Potential" scores with a red line or a broken line.

7. Use a different summary form for each role group involved in the assessment.

8. Later you may want to compare responses of particular role groups by plotting them on the same summary form or by converting the summary grid into a transparency and superimposing the data for the role groups one on the other.

9. A similar analysis of items may be made using Table 2.

D. Interpretation of the Category or Item Analysis

In interpreting the results of your analysis of categories or items you may find responses to the following types of questions of value:

1. Which practices or conditions are least developed in your school?

2. Which of the above categories or items are seen as having the highest potential positive impact on your school? Perhaps the faculty should consider a project to increase the degree to which these activities operate in the school.

3. Which practices or conditions are most developed in your school? What could be done to strengthen these activities?

4. Which of the categories or items are rated by the faculty as having the lowest potential for affecting the school's effectiveness in a positive manner? Does this mean that the faculty should spend less time in further developing these activities than in developing others?

TABLE 2

ITEM DATA FROM INDICATORS OF SCHOOL QUALITY

	Frequency				
	0	1	2	3	Mean
1. CURRICULAR CONGRUENCE					
1. LEANER OBJECTIVES EXIST WHICH ARE CLEAR, VALID, AND SEQUENCED.					
2. THERE IS A MATCH BETWEEN THE WRITTEN CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT, i.e., THE TESTS REFLECT THE CURRICULUM.					
3. THERE IS A MATCH BETWEEN INSTRUCTION AND THE WRITTEN CURRICULUM.					
2. ASSESSMENT					
4. THE SCHOOL (OR DISTRICT) HAS ESTABLISHED EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT PURPOSES AND PRIORITIES.					
5. A VARIETY OF MEASURES OR INDICATORS ARE USED WHICH ARE APPROPRIATE FOR THE OBJECTIVES.					
6. STUDENT OUTCOME RESULTS AND OTHER EVALUATIONS ARE REPORTED TO APPROPRIATE PUBLICS AND INDIVIDUALS, AND THE RESULTS USED TO MAKE DECISIONS FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT.					
3. LEADERSHIP OF THE PRINCIPAL					
7. THE PRINCIPAL MAINTAINS AN ONGOING, EFFECTIVE STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, AWARE THAT THE STAFF REGULARLY NEEDS NEW SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN EXCELLENCE IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM.					
8. THE PRINCIPAL SUPPORTS AND ENCOURAGES THE STAFF, IS SEEN AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE, i.e., IMPROVEMENT, AND AS A STRONG EDUCATIONAL LEADER.					
9. THE PRINCIPAL IS SEEN AS A PERSON WHO INVOLVES THE STAFF AND STUDENTS IN REACHING DECISIONS.					
10. THE PRINCIPAL KNOWS WHAT THE COMMUNITY EXPECTS OF THE SCHOOL, AND ACTIVELY SEEKS PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR STUDENTS' EDUCATION.					
11. THE PRINCIPAL SETS HIGH BUT REALISTIC STANDARDS FOR PERFORMANCE AND LETS THE STAFF, STUDENTS AND PARENTS KNOW WHAT THESE STANDARDS ARE.					
4. HIGH EXPECTATIONS					
12. THIS SCHOOL HAS HIGH EXPECTATIONS OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS.					
13. TEACHERS GIVE REWARDS, PRAISE AND RECOGNITION TO STUDENTS FOR THEIR PERFORMANCE.					

Table 2 (continued)

	Frequency				
	0	1	2	3	Mean
5. SCHOOL-WIDE NORMS, VALUES, PRACTICES AND POLICIES					
14. VALUES AND NORMS ARE CONSISTENT THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL AND ARE ACCEPTED BY STAFF AND STUDENTS.					
15. SCHOOL POLICIES WHICH AFFECT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GAINS ARE CLEAR AND HAVE STUDENT AND STAFF SUPPORT.					
6. SCHOOL CLIMATE FACTORS					
16. RESPECT.					
17. TRUST.					
18. HIGH MORALE.					
19. COHESIVENESS.					
20. CARING.					
21. CONDITIONS IN THIS SCHOOL SUPPORT A PLEASANT AND COMFORTABLE CLIMATE FOR STUDENTS.					
22. SPECIFIC SYMPTOMS OR INDICATORS OF POSITIVE CLIMATE ARE GENERALLY HIGH.					
7. MONITORING AND FEEDBACK OF STUDENT PROGRESS					
23. THE SCHOOL HAS AN EVALUATION PROGRAM THAT MONITORS AND REPORTS STUDENT PROGRESS.					
24. EACH STUDENT IS MONITORED FREQUENTLY AND RECEIVES INFORMATION REGARDING HIS/HER PERFORMANCE.					
25. TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS AND PARENTS ARE KEPT AWARE OF PUPIL PROGRESS RELATIVE TO OBJECTIVES.					
8. TIME ON TASK					
26. THE AMOUNTS OF TIME ALL STUDENTS SPEND ENGAGED OR ON TASK IS HIGH (MINIMUM OF 70% OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL PERIOD).					
27. ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, AND SUPPORT STAFF ENFORCE A POLICY THAT NO ONE DISTURBS A TEACHER DURING INSTRUCTION.					

9. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL SETTING

28. TEACHERS BEGIN THE SCHOOL YEAR EFFECTIVELY BY SETTING THE STAGE FOR LEARNING.

29. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL SETTING IS SUCH THAT ALL STUDENTS HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SUCCESS.

30. TEACHERS PREPARE STUDENTS FOR INDEPENDENT INQUIRY AND STUDY.

31. THERE IS WIDESPREAD SUPPORT FROM THE SCHOOL STAFF, PARENTS AND STUDENTS REGARDING THE SCHOOL'S NORMS FOR STUDENT BEHAVIOR.

32. TEACHERS HAVE AND USE A VARIETY OF DISCIPLINE STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING DISRUPTIVE STUDENTS.

10. INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

33. TEACHERS CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT MODELS HIGH LEARNING EXPECTATIONS.

34. TEACHERS CHOOSE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES THAT PROVIDE GREATER AMOUNTS OF TIME FOR STUDENT-TEACHER INTERACTION.

35. TEACHERS USE APPROPRIATE DISCUSSION TECHNIQUES TO PROMOTE HIGH SUCCESS AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS FOR ALL STUDENTS.

11. PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

36. PARENTS OF OUR STUDENTS WORK WITH THEM AT HOME IN SUPPORT OF THE SCHOOL'S PROGRAM.

37. THERE IS A STRONG PROGRAM OF PARENT-SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION IN THE SCHOOL.

38. THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE INCLUDING BUSINESS, OTHER INSTITUTIONS AND CITIZENS WITHOUT CHILDREN IN THE SCHOOL IS INVOLVED IN SUPPORTING THE SCHOOL.

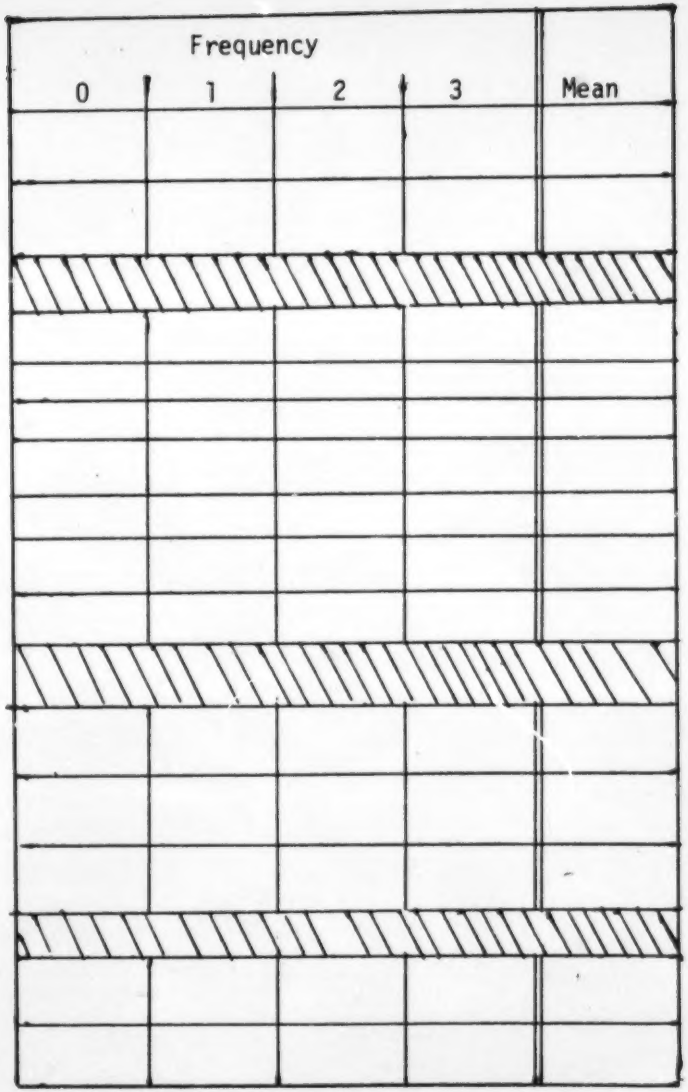
12. ACCOUNTABILITY, ACCREDITATION/ PLANNING PROCESS

39. THE SCHOOL AND DISTRICT HAVE ASSESSED THEIR NEEDS AND STRENGTHS AND IDENTIFIED PRIORITIES FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT.

40. PLANS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED FOR EACH IMPROVEMENT PRIORITY.

41. IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS AND INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS ARE IMPLEMENTED, EVALUATED AND MODIFIED.

42. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS EXIST TO REPORT STUDENT OUTCOMES AND IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS TO THE STAFF AND PUBLIC.



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